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New investigation reveals the cruel reality for pigs reared for Parma Ham



Pigs kept in barren environment without adequate enrichment. A chain is not enough to keep pigs occupied, EU laws require materials such as straw. © LAV / Eurogroup

An undercover [investigation](#) released today by Lega Anti Vivisezione (LAV), has revealed the shocking reality for many pigs raised on farms producing Parma Ham and other Italian speciality foods.

The [footage](#) obtained on six farms located in the provinces of Brescia, Cremona and Mantua, shows pigs confined permanently indoors, in overcrowded, barren sheds, on bare concrete or slatted floors. The pigs have no bedding or enrichment of any kind, are living in their own faeces and urine, and have had their tails cut off. Many of the pigs seen were in dire need of veterinary care. EU legislation requires the provision of material such as straw which helps to prevent tail-biting which is the reason tails are cut short. The legislation also bans routine tail-docking.

“The conditions seen on these farms are cruel and in many cases illegal,” explained Sean Gifford, Head of Public Campaigns at Compassion in World Farming. “These pigs are not being treated as sentient beings, but as mere meat-producing machines.”

“Sadly, the appalling conditions revealed in the footage are typical of the many pigs farmed in the EU.”

Parma Ham is often thought of as an Italian product of excellence, exported and renowned worldwide, yet the terrible plight of these pigs highlights the need for pig welfare standards to be implemented in Italy and across the EU.

Eurogroup for Animals - of which Compassion in World Farming is a member organisation - is calling on the EU and on Member States to fully enforce EU pig welfare legislation. Members of the public who are outraged by the findings of this investigation can add their voice by signing the [End Pig Pain petition](#).

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Investigation footage and supporting documents can be found [here](#)

For more information please email mediateam@ciwf.org.uk or call 01483 541 886

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Notes to Editors

1. Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe, in the US, China and South Africa.
2. To find out more about Compassion in World Farming visit: www.ciwf.org
3. Eurogroup's primary focus is to improve animal welfare as quickly as possible by lobbying EU institutions to deliver better legislation and enforcement.

As the only pan-European umbrella organisation for animal welfare, they direct the national influence of each of its members into a powerful group network, creating opportunities for change across Europe that cannot be achieved individually.

4. To find out more about Eurogroup visit: www.eurogroupforanimals.org

5. The footage reveals:

- Routine tail docking. The overwhelming majority of the pigs of all ages with their tails cut off. Tails are visible inside a waste skip holding carcasses of dead animals (mostly piglets) and other remains;
- Pigs kept in barren pens on slatted floors, overcrowded, chewing at the ears, muzzles and limbs of other pigs;
- Sick animals in need of veterinary care. In one case, a severely emaciated and lame sow in a gestation unit is seen crawling with difficulty towards the feeding trough. The same sow is filmed while lying on the floor shivering;
- Pigs suffering from painful rectal prolapse (a condition leading to death if untreated, whereby the rectum loses its normal attachment inside the body, allowing it to protrude through the anus), eye infections, untreated ulcerated tail lesions and abdominal hernias (which if untreated can grow, cause painful torsions and in some cases become ulcerated);
- Carcasses of dead pigs left close to occupied enclosures for long periods of time;
- Faeces and urine all over feeding troughs and covering the pigs, with pigs urinating on each other;
- In one specific case two foetuses that a sow has aborted lie on the floor.

6. EU legislation requires:

- “Neither tail docking nor reduction of corner teeth must be carried out routinely but only where there is evidence that injuries to sows' teats or to other pigs' ears or tails have occurred.” **Before carrying out these procedures, other measures shall be taken to prevent tail biting and other vices taking into account environment and stocking densities.** For this reason inadequate environmental conditions or management systems must be changed.
- “Pigs must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such ...”

Annex to Council Directive 2008/120/EEC

- The barren environments shown in this footage do not show the provision of any of these materials, let alone a sufficient quantity. All tails have been docked, suggesting the practice remains routine. Improving the environment sufficiently to prevent the need for routine tail-docking requires the provision of sufficient material for them to investigate so that they don't turn to the investigation of each other which results in tail-biting.